

QRV? Training supplement

Personal Preparedness

Editor's Note: We're going to begin our personal preparedness materials with this article from Jim Mullen. It presents a fine introduction and rationale for personal preparedness.

From the EOC

By Jim Mullen, Director
Seattle Emergency Management

Perhaps as an example of how one train of thought can flow (or lurch) into another, I began to write this piece for QRV? thinking that it was going to be about Emergency Management's transfer from the Department of Administrative Services (now Executive Services Department) to the Seattle Police Department. I was particularly going to describe the adjustment the staff underwent, the differences encountered in going from one organizational culture to another, and to try to characterize the impact this change might have on the ACS program.

That train of thought led me to think of the similarities, not the differences, that different organizations and personnel share, with respect to the principal responsibility to manage an emergency situation appropriately. When a disaster occurs, no one is of much use to themselves or their fellow human beings if they are not able to help themselves, or if uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones must compete for attention with their response duties. That is why our

constant emphasis is on personal and family preparedness as the most important responsibility. Whether you are police, fire, public works, medical services, or volunteer personnel, in the moments following a disaster you will either be able to work effectively or not largely based upon the level of prior preparation you have achieved. A friend from another jurisdiction once told me "All the expletives in the world will not express your silent disappointment if something you knew you should have taken care of was

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left undone" when an event occurs. It is important that we methodically identify the tasks that will help us be prepared, and that will help us have confidence that the people we care about are themselves prepared, at school, at work, at home. Then we have to do each task, one at a time, so that we can

know we have done everything we can to offset the disruption that a major disaster will cause.

In Seattle Emergency Management we worry a lot that even responders who are experienced and understand that preparation is critical may at times feel overwhelmed at the volume of things that need to be done. Writing a family plan, keeping the extra food and water supplies fresh and available, and all those other details (I have seen lists with 100 do's) aren't easy, or everyone would do it. That's why the Seattle Disaster Aid and Response Team (SDART) Program emphasizes taking a step at a time, getting as much handled as you can without breaking your budget or setting aside all other responsibilities. We want preparedness on a personal level to become not a one-time activity, breathlessly undertaken, accomplished, and forgotten. Instead, we recommend that people make preparedness a less urgent, more regular consideration, like paying insurance premiums on a car or home (we don't buy it, and it's not affordable, because a problem is likely, we do it because you can't buy the insurance after the accident occurs). We do it so we are always prepared.

For ACS responders, it will be very important to us and your fellow citizens that you are in a position to respond when needed. We expect you to be where you need to be if you can do it safely, but it is unrealistic for us to expect you to

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When, Not If

The First in a Series on Personal Preparedness

By Ray Stommel
N7QAK

We all know that A.C.S. exists to back up City of Seattle emergency services in serious catastrophes. What catastrophes?

Our esteemed leader LuAn Johnson pointed out at SDART Saturday '98 that historically the Seattle area suffers a serious earthquake every 27 years. Then, as she said, the last one occurred in 1965. Yeah, you're right, we are OVERDUE! There may be other bad problems - windstorms, floods, fires, you name it - but the imminent threat to Seattle is another Big One.

If our focus is on the Big One, what is our role? We will review that role in several issues of QRV?.

THE PRE-QUAKE PREPARATION ROLE

There isn't any doubt that the key to helping others is to be ready ourselves.

Without adequate preparation, we risk being overwhelmed when the call comes. So as back-up communicators, what does that mean?

1 - Our equipment must be ready. Does your handheld work properly? Is your mobile rig functioning? Are ALL batteries

charged? Do you have other charged spare batteries? Consider acquiring a marine deep-cycle battery, and keeping it charged. All lose charge over time. How about antennas: roof-top mag-mounts, J-poles with ropes, portable cube-quads, ground-plane verticals? And don't forget co-ax cables and connectors. Have you tested them with your rigs?

2 - Our cars must be ready. All of us will use our cars to go to our assigned location. Many of us will rely on our cars for shelter, warmth and electrical power, as well as an operating position - maybe for several days. Are there connecting cables and wires for your radios? Do you refill the gas tank at 1/2 or above? Is there a spare quart of oil?

3 - Our personal supplies must be ready. Warm clothing and rain gear are musts, since we can assume that power and gas will not be available. Just as important are food and water. What do you plan to eat for a day or two? What will you use for light - flashlights and spare batteries, or a gas lamp? What about sleeping gear - sleeping bag, tent, blankets, etc.? Plastic "Space Blankets" are easy to pack and carry. Have you put aside a battery AM radio for news? What about personal items like a towel, a toothbrush, a razor and prescription pills? Rounding them up could take time. Be sure to include a first aid kit

among your personal supplies. You may need this for yourself or for others.

4 - Have you put these items together in a place where you can find them rapidly, and load them in your car? A handy light container is a plastic laundry basket, located near your car, and it won't melt in the rain.

These are obvious necessary planning steps, but easily overlooked or lost in the stress of everyday life. The best way to be ready is to GET ready. — — — — —

EOC, From front of Page

carry out the responsibilities you have volunteered and trained for if you are concerned about the welfare of your families. The concerns you can take care of in advance will be issues that will not interfere with your availability in the event: and it will also mean that the return on your training and participation will be very high indeed.

We always tell ourselves that every problem we deal with in advance will allow us to move on to the next set of problems: no event will be worry-free. Those things that we can foresee, we should address. So, get prepared and stay prepared. Do it methodically. We will all be needed somewhere in a disaster to carry out tasks for which we have trained and are qualified, and someone's welfare will be dependent upon how we have each personally prepared. — — — — —

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Equipment Operation/Station Deployment

Essential Materials & Equipment

Practical Examples

By John Angell KB7LYD

As I am sure all of you recall, an actual disaster will bring havoc to the infrastructure of a city. Telephone poles will come down, and so will the power lines that run with them. Bridges will collapse, and large gaps will break up a lot of our streets. Electricity will undoubtedly be out for some time as well. We all need to take time and think for a moment of how much we take for granted. Many of us also take for granted our cars, and the availability of gas to run them. But what if the roads are so damaged that it is not possible to drive to your ACS post. Are you prepared for this?

To test this during our last earthquake drill, I decided to travel by bicycle. That's right! A peddle type bike! The advantages of this type of travel are great. I live across from Decatur School at 7700 43rd NE, and the post I planned to man was Laurelhust Community Center. It took me twenty minutes to get from my home to Laurelhust CC. I thought about the possibilities of trees or telephone poles over the road. If I indeed came upon them, I could just carry my bike over them. If they were too big to go over, I could go around them. If the streets were blocked, I could go through yards. At one point, I

crossed over a bridge that could go down in an earthquake. What if that bridge were down? I could go one block West where there is a trail that would take me through the ravine far from the bridge. My post at Laurelhust had only one antenna requirement, a way to throw over a weight with a string attached. A tree I found served this purpose well.

But what about equipment? The primary radios I would use are an ICOM IC-2GAT 2 meter radio and a Radio Shack HTX-404. Both of these radios share the same bat-

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tery types. I have several BP-4's, a dry cell battery case using six AA batteries. One set of these batteries would run the IC-2GAT at normal use for twenty hours.

So, in my back pack, I had these two radios, three BP-4's and eighteen extra AA batteries. I also carried my Standard C-108A. This radio operates on 2 meters at 230 mw and will operate at normal use for 168 hours on two AA batteries. I also carried a Standard 220 MHz radio for the fun of it.

For an antenna, I brought 1/2 wave hotrod antennas. The advantage of the half wave antenna is

that it does not need a ground plane. Also, in my backpack, I had thirty feet of RG 58 coax with BNC connectors, some thin but strong kite string, and a carabineer. I tied the carabineer to the string, and threw it over a tree branch about twenty feet in the air. Tied the end of the string to the hotrod antenna, attached the coax, and hoisted the antenna into the air with the coax hanging down from it. Now I had a good antenna twenty feet above the ground, and battery power for at last several days, and with my Standard C-108A, I could run for months. To make things work easier, I also had a speaker mike.

Other items I was able to bring were: backpack type tents, a folding stool, 2 liters of water, snack bars, a first aid kit, and a GPS. (*GPS = Geographical Positioning System -ed.*)

So, why did I do this? To demonstrate to myself and others the value of alternative transportation, and that with a little forethought and planning, a person could set up a quality, emergency powered station without needing big radios and large batteries.

Most of these ideas come from years of bicycle camping, and setting up stations in remote areas. Recently, I was given a mountain bike from my father. This bike needs a lot of work, but I will have a plan that would allow me to ride this bike after a disaster and be able to setup not only a voice, but a packet station at any location I can get to.

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Equipment Operation/Station Deployment

Top Ten Transceiver Commands

By Peter Smith N7BYP

Modern VHF/UHF transceivers have many features and functions. They allow us great flexibility and convenience in the use of our radios. If we don't know how to access and enable/disable the functions, however, they have the potential of making our rigs unusable. Often, these functions are accessed through a sequence of keypad entries. The problem is that correct keypad entries for given functions are not always obvious.

Here are ten important transceiver functions you may need for emergency communication. Test yourself. Can you perform all ten without your manual? If not, be sure to put a copy of your transceiver operation manual in your "ready kit." Practice accessing each of these functions regularly. This is especially important if you only occasionally use your rig. Fast, efficient, and reliable operation of your radio will be essential when you take up your communications post.

1. Change frequency.
2. Change band (if you have a multi band transceiver).
3. Change repeater offset: -/+/off (simplex).
4. Enable/disable CTCSS access tone.
5. Change frequency of CTCSS access tone.
6. Enable/disable keypad lock.
7. Enable/disable dial lock.
8. Enable/disable transmit lock.
9. Change transmit power levels.
10. Check battery condition.

Are there important radio commands *not* on this list? If so, please send them to the editor. **-----**